

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached drawing sheets include changes to Figs 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D and 2.

The changes are described in the Remarks section of this paper.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets

REMARKS

Claims 1-3 are pending. Claims 5 and 6 have been withdrawn. The applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

In paragraph 3 of the office action, Figs 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D and 2 were objected to for not being labeled as prior art. In the two attached replacement sheets, Figs 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D and 2 have been labeled as prior art. No other changes have been made to the drawings.

The typographical errors noted in paragraphs 4 and 5 of the office action have been corrected.

Claims 1 and 2 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Itagake. The applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn for the following reasons.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite that a stitching thread is located within the thin portion, and the stitching thread is exposed on a back side of the leather material at the stitching portion. This feature is shown, for example, in Fig. 4 and Fig. 5C, where the stitching thread 24 is exposed on the back side of the leather material, which faces the ring part R.

The patent to Itagake fails to show or suggest stitching that is exposed on the back side of the leather material. Therefore the applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

Claims 3 and 4 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Itagake. The applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn for the following reasons.

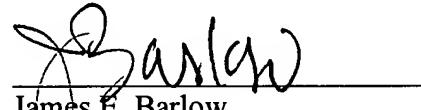
Claims 3 and 4 depend on claim 1, directly or indirectly. Therefore, claims 3 and 4 are considered to be patentable over Itagake for at least the reasons given above with respect to claim 1.

Claim 7 is new. Claim 7 depends on claim 1 and is therefore considered to be patentable for the reasons given above with respect to claim 1.

In view of the foregoing, the applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. A timely notice to that effect is respectfully requested. If questions relating to patentability remain, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone.

If there are any problems with the payment of fees, please charge any underpayments and credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-1147.

Respectfully submitted,



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